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THE DOUBLE STANDARD IN REGARD TO FIGHTING

BY

GEORGE M. STRATTON

Professor of Psychology at the University of California

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The Executive Committee of the Association for International Conciliation wish to arouse the interest of the American people in the progress of the movement for promoting international peace and relations of comity and good fellowship between nations. To this end they print and circulate documents giving information as to the progress of these movements, in order that individual citizens, the newspaper press, and organizations of various kinds may have readily available accurate information on these subjects. A list of publications will be found on page 15.

George M. Stratton was born in Oakland, California, on September 26, 1865. He studied at the University of California and at Yale University, and in 1896 received the degree of Ph.D. at Leipzig. At one time Professor of Experimental Psychology at Johns Hopkins University; since 1908 he has been Professor of Psychology at the University of California. He is the author of "Experimental Psychology and Its Bearing upon Culture," "Psychology of the Religious Life," and of numerous contributions to psychological and other journals.

THE DOUBLE STANDARD IN REGARD TO FIGHTING

It is a puzzling fact that international conduct is so often judged by far lower standards than are the acts of individuals. We have here a strange doubling of the criterion of honor, analogous to that double standard of truth, which was defended in mediæval schools. Violence, lying, and bribery, that occur only among individuals without the pale, are found among the established means of intercourse with honored nations. Men who would not think of assaulting another to gain an end—who would indeed suffer great loss, and be proud to suffer it, rather than obtain their rights by such a method—feel that a nation should be ever ready to assert its claims by blows. A peace that would be the height of honor with an individual is, when presented in national form, at once proclaimed shameful and unrighteous.

How Neighbors Avoid a Quarrel

And this double standard affects not simply the decision as to the propriety of assault, but as to the best means of avoiding conflict. With nations, we are

constantly assured, the way to keep peace is to be so conspicuously armed that nobody will dare attack you. The prescription here is to appeal directly to fear; to terrorize your neighbors into respect and quiet. In private life if a man aims to avoid conflict, he shows some confidence in others' good intentions. He does not shake his fist in the face of each passer-by and proclaim his passionate desire to be let alone. It would seem laughable to attempt to build deep and lasting amity between your own home and that of your neighbor across the way by having at each of your windows a loaded gun trained on his front door. Nor would the effect of these be offset by frequent assurances of devotion and by the expressed hope that the ammunition would never have to be fired. We do not act in this way; and yet have we ever stopped to consider the lack of protection to our private honor and person? Smith may arrive at any moment and, finger on trigger, compel us to surrender our spoons. Jones, having some baseless grievance, may put upon us the lasting disgrace of pulling our defenceless nose. We who are unprepared to murder, cannot know when we will have to submit to some dishonorable peace. Without a revolver in one's hip-pocket a person has absolutely no means to keep unrighteousness from deserting the earth. All these things, *mutatis mutandis,* are said of international society, and without a smile.

It is thus evident that the mind behaves in a very different fashion with regard to personal conflicts and with regard to national. Two nations go about the task of living next door to each other in a way entirely different from that which any two citizens, one from each of these countries, would follow. Imagine an American and a Japanese, imagine an Englishman and a German, espying each other in Van Dieman's Land or in the heart of Africa, beyond the fear of police or any other power of state; as soon as they recognized the civilized dress, would they skurry each to a rifle pit? They would greet each other as friends, and be glad to pitch their unguarded tents near by. This difference of behavior may baffle us, but we must at least attempt to look into so astonishing a fact.

It seems at the moment as though Emerson were right, at least with regard to large masses, in saying that men always come down to meet. The collective impulse, the collective sense of responsibility, seems to be no higher than what the lowest, or at most the average, can participate in. Yet this is by no means always true. The collective consciousness, under some unaccustomed strain like that of the wide-spread movement against slavery, can measure well up to that of the individual. In giving quick relief in distress

of fire and earthquake, as in San Francisco, or at Messina, the nation feels and acts generously, like an individual. There are situations, then, when corporate impulse is high; there are others when it is selfish and quarrelsome.

Why the Citizen Goes Unarmed

But when the selfish, the antipathetic, mood is on, there is the greater readiness in nations to pass from irritation to assault because the quiet restraint, the external yet immaterial pressure which individuals feel, though present also with nations, is far weaker. You or I if threatened with gross wrong, have about us a company of friends and neighbors with a ready sympathy for us, a ready condemnation of the wrong-doer. And in their unselfish opinion there is a subtle coercive strength which only the abnormal can resist. Moreover there is for individuals a definite and visible organization for protecting rights. You and I become less ready to fight because of the stable sense that powers are on call to do our fighting for us. Civilized society is organized in specialties, and our fighting—like our farming, our news-selling, our blacksmithing—we delegate to those who are, in a sense, licensed so to do.

Our courts and police and soldiery, organized to work impartially for the common good, are there as a visible power to which you and I can appeal, and their

very presence helps to quiet the fighting impulse in us. The just man threatened need not always appeal to the judge or the police or the soldiery; the man of hostile purpose does not have to see these nor even imagine them, in order to feel their force deep in his very mind and muscles. They have, with most of us, produced habits of thought and conduct that would go on of themselves even were we to be alone with a stranger on a desert isle.

The Gentleman Has Grown from the Swashbuckler

Thus it is true that the assumption of the quarreling function by the state is one of the causes why private citizens, unlike nations, can go unarmed. But it is not the whole truth. It is also true that the very organization of such a public power was due to a growing distaste of individual brawls. Persons preferred to devote their time and talent to other ends. In the olden time every gentleman must be a fighter, must carry a sword as the tool and symbol of his temper. But for special or disagreeable work he could go forth privately and engage his fighter—his private soldiery, his bravos, his assassins—as he would engage a tailor or a locksmith. But it became apparent that in all this the interest of the plain man suffered. Men left free to institute a mortal fight whenever they believed that some right had been invaded, in general

did ten wrongs for every right defended. The swashbuckler therefore yielded to the court and the police. The fighting industry has thus been made a state monopoly. The courts and police are not the sole reason why private fighting is no longer legitimate; courts and police are there because men wished to stop private fighting. The citizens have trained themselves for other work and insist on being freed from the necessity of private warfare. And while each of us runs the risk of occasional assault from some one who does not accept this great idea, yet we positively refuse to plan our lives for these exceptional emergencies. We may need a pistol some day even on our village street, but we refuse to carry it.

The Lower National Standards

International life is still in the swashbuckler stage. Each people is belted and booted and spurred, with loud shoutings that this alone is the way to peace. This retarded development of international life, is in part perhaps because finer organization comes more readily with small bodies than with great. The sympathy and understanding upon which such organization must in the end rest comes first in the immediate family, then in the clan, then widens to a nation, and only late can it include people who speak different languages and have different color of skin. Yet the Swiss are three peoples speaking three different lan-

guages. And that great federation of nations called the British Empire, far larger than was held together by Roman arms, is based mainly on sympathy and understanding. With all its warlike bearing toward the outside world it is a great instrument of peace among its own constituent states. The obstacles to an outbreak of war between any two of them are almost heaven-high. So, too, the union of so many of the American colonies, and the failure to dissolve that union even by the terrific tension of fifty years ago, is one of the world-contributions to the cause of peace.

The Nobler Strain in National Fighting

But the persistence of public fighting where the modern gentleman would not fight is not alone because it is difficult to maintain wide sympathy beyond the limits of language or of race. It is also because public fighting has a certain spiritual impressiveness, even a form of great morality. For in spite of its infinite horror, there is in the combat of nations something nobler than is usual in private bloodshed. The unselfishness, the welding of spirits in battle, makes it seem less revolting. For rarely do men go to war to-day for private gain. The dollars and cents which are a soldier's hire would never for a moment weigh in cold calculation against the money loss, the pitiless fatigue, the imminent disease, the risk of death. Over all is the inspiration of a public interest. For the

time, he throws his hope and fortune into the common treasury. He is an idealist; he is devoted to a wider cause. Yet more often his is idealism astray, beautiful inasmuch as all devotion, all self-forgetfulness, has beauty; but hideous, also, since a fine spirit has gone into devil's work. It has the form of morality, without the substance. It is like the loyalty of a servant in the work of a master who contrives a great wrong.

Will the National Standards Change?

National fighting is still a part of the accepted order, held in a certain honor, carefully provided for by all the leading peoples; yet personal brawls have come to be regarded as lapses from the approved course, and unbefitting a gentleman. Is this difference of feeling and of judgment destined to pass away?

The history of mental progress gives an absolute assurance that this difference will pass away. Men who argue and labor in defence of the bravado-standard of international dealing are supporters of an essentially lost cause. They are like those who some generations ago would have declared it quixotic to imagine that individuals could ever entrust their personal safety permanently to the peaceable intentions of others. National life will surely in this respect come to be judged by standards at least as high as those by which personal conduct is measured.

What Will Produce the Change

For the same motives which have dispelled the combative ideal from all but the lowest individuals will also prevail over the minds of nations. As the joy of mere fighting could not, in the mass of men, compete with the more substantial satisfaction of success in artizanship, agriculture, medicine, architecture, and trade, and the man who was eager for rewards of this type consented to forego the respect which comes of being a dangerous shot or swordsman, ready for the instant's quarrel; so the state will increasingly feel the attractive ends from which it is excluded by the effort at constant readiness for war. Every fresh opportunity for truly fruitful action by government tends to produce coolness toward the warrior-ideal. Men become jealous of the enormous expense for military purposes when once they clearly see the definite benefits they lose because the needed money goes to purposes of war.[1]

We judge men by the ratio of their accomplishments to their opportunities. And so it must be with nations. As we gradually learn that the will and intelligence of the nation can do even more eminently

[1] Attention cannot be drawn too often to the fact that—leaving out of account the Postal Service, where income and expense nearly balance—the ordinary disbursements of the United States government for purposes connected with war are about twice as great as for all other purposes combined.

than any single individual the work of fighting disease and ignorance and vice; that indeed only the united people can to-day insure free communication and just commerce; that the growth and application of science increases vastly by public support; when there are all these opportunities for national effort, men will not be content to approve a government whose main effort is merely to be prepared for attack from without. Swagger and sword-clanking and parade of "honor" will no longer satisfy the newer measure of worth; they no longer seem the prime use of so high and effective an instrument as the national power.

Causes of Hope and of Hesitation

The higher standards are not something merely of the future. They have already brought it to pass that a permanent and impartial tribunal is available in all cases of international dispute. And their work will go on, I believe, until there is also available an impartial military force to protect the single nation from aggression. Until then, the state will rightly hesitate to imitate in all fullness the entirely defenceless bearing of the gentleman. For he, as I have said, has been made confident and secure by long experience of an independent power interested to enforce his rights. And this, which is wanting to our present nations, gives each a certain excuse for its great armament, and for declaring the personal standard of conduct inapplica-

ble to the nation's life. But the deep desires of humanity are indomitable, and the longing for international law-and-order, daily becoming more intense, will force aside this last obstacle to the full recognition of the higher standard.

The Newer Standards Need Not Await Universal Peace

Yet a confusion should be avoided. The change to the higher standard in regard to fighting does not itself have to be postponed to a time when wars shall cease. In private life the standards of judgment by which theft and murder are condemned are not counted visionary because theft and murder persistently occur. To admit that wars will sometimes come in spite of all that can be done does not make invalid the higher canons of national conduct. And these higher criteria will, in the end, transform the facts into fuller accord with themselves. They will exercise an unfailing pressure, resistible, it is true, but by their very persistence changing the entire aspect of international life.

What Makes a Higher Standard Apply

Thus we may meet the old assertion that the laws of private honor do not apply to national affairs. They apply whenever men care to apply them. In this respect they are in contrast with natural laws.

The law of gravitation does not wait for us; it stands on duty day and night. So do moral laws; yet in a measure they are only then real and effective when human wills accept them. And whenever nations desire peace with that passion long-enduring and provident, with which they now desire trade and territory and wide sway, the higher law will apply because the nations will then judge themselves by it. The disturbers of international peace will then appear like ruffians on a city's street.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Nos. 1–52, inclusive (April, 1907–March, 1912). Including papers by Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, George Trumbull Ladd, Elihu Root, Barrett Wendell, Charles E. Jefferson, Seth Low, William James, Andrew Carnegie, Philander C. Knox, Pope Pius X, Heinrich Lammasch, and others. A list of titles and authors will be sent on application.

53. The Mirage of the Map, by Norman Angell. April, 1912.

54. Philosophy of the Third American Peace Congress, by Theodore Marburg. May, 1912.

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55. The International Mind. Opening Address at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, by Nicholas Murray Butler, June, 1912.

56. The Irrationality of War. On Science as an Element in the Developing of International Good Will and Understanding, by Sir Oliver Lodge, July, 1912.

57. The Interest of the Wage-earner in the Present Status of the Peace Movement; Address Delivered at the Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration, by Charles Patrick Neill, August, 1912.

58. The Relation of Social Theory to Public Policy, by Franklin H. Giddings, September, 1912.

59. The Double Standard in Regard to Fighting, by George M. Stratton, October, 1912.

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